

# Oral presentation: guidelines

## Requirements:

- Individual
- 20 minutes + 10-minute discussion
- Use a Power Point slideshow
- You are NOT allowed to read but you can have notes or an outline.
- Topic (starting point): Philosophy and ... (choose 1 of the following topics) Ethics – Success/Failure – Reality – Morality – Beauty – Freedom/Free Will – Consciousness – Politics

## Assessment grid:

<b>1. Delivery:</b> pronunciation + fluency + intonation; audibility and clarity of speech; body language (eye contact, lively hands,...); enthusiasm; rhythm and length of the presentation; usefulness of visual support	Good - Fair - Below average – poor to very poor	/5
<b>2. Vocabulary :</b> accuracy, variety, correctness	Good - Fair - Below average – poor to very poor	/5
<b>3. Grammar :</b> accuracy, variety, correctness	Good - Fair - Below average – poor to very poor	/5
<b>4. Contents:</b> relevant treatment of the information; clear structure; knowledge of topic; ability to field questions	Good - Fair - Below average – poor to very poor	/5
<b>Overall assessment of the presentation:</b>	Good - Fair - Below average – poor to very poor	/20

# How to give a good presentation

## Prepare

- **Topic: be specific!** Narrow down your topic as much as you can so you don't end up with a general overview of the topic. Your audience wants to learn something new! So first, ask yourself: "What do I already know about the topic and what do I want to learn/discover about it?". Write it down. Then, write down questions ("I know that X says this or that about reality, but what does Y say?", "Has the meaning of "reality" changed over the centuries?",...). Another way to narrow down your topic is to add time, location, ... For example, "Philosophy and Politics in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe", or "Women philosophers and Politics", or "Capitalism and the philosophy of success", or "The Simpsons as Philosophers: a representation of morality".  
**Find a topic you would want to learn about!**
- Gather the information you need and **WRITE** your presentation paper. **Do not CUT and PASTE.** Written English is very different from spoken English.
- Plan your talk carefully and **practise it**. Practising means actually standing up and giving the talk either to a friend or to yourself. If you practise your presentation just once, your talk will be infinitely smoother
- Pay special attention to highly technical or novel items, to make sure that you convey these clearly and concisely to an audience who may not have come across them before. Check their pronunciation.
- Use a timer to time your presentation when preparing it at home and make sure it does not last the time allocated for your talk.

## Present

When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an actor is on stage. How you are being perceived is very important.

- 1) Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant.
- 2) Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous.
- 3) Speak slowly, **enunciate clearly**. Don't mumble. **Vary the tone** of your voice.
- 4) Talk to your audience. **Do not read from notes**. Know your talk well enough to give it, with **a few notes**, in easy-to-follow conversational sentences.
- 5) Speak with conviction. Keep an upbeat speaking style. Use a loud, clear, **enthusiastic** voice. If you don't seem to care about your topic, why should your audience?
- 6) **Keep your audience interested** throughout your entire presentation: use visual aids to enhance your presentation, give practical examples, interesting tidbits, humorous asides, etc. People will be less likely to drift off.
- 7) **DO NOT TRANSLATE technical terms** in the course of your presentation; define them in English or use visual aids to illustrate what they mean.
- 8) Pause. **Don't race through your presentation** and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of breath.
- 9) Know when to stop talking: **always keep an eye on your watch** and if you are short of time, know what can be safely left out. If you have extra time, know what could be effectively added. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

To end your presentation, summarize your main points in the same way as you normally do in the **CONCLUSION** of a written paper. Terminate your presentation with an interesting remark or an appropriate punch line. Leave your listeners with a positive impression and a sense of completion. Thank your audience and sit down.

## Resort to visual support

A great rule of presenting is to **avoid distractions**. The audience needs to be concentrating on what you say. Illustrate your talk with whatever supports seem appropriate but **DO NOT circulate illustrations** whatsoever: the students will simply not listen to what you say while they look at them.

**Use a combination of PowerPoint and blackboard if possible.** Actually writing on a board tends to capture the audience's attention for a little while, but gets boring pretty quickly, so use it as emphasis.

## Tips for Producing Effective Slides or Overheads (inc. Powerpoint)

The cardinal rule for making slides is to include only the relevant information and to make sure your audience can read your slides.

- **Check the English of ANY written text** (all headlines, labels and captions on slides, and additional explanations on the blackboard). There CAN'T BE any spelling or grammar mistakes!
- **Check the PRONUNCIATION of all technical words used.**
- Include **only necessary information** on slides.
- **Don't read from the slides!**
- **Avoid tables** but, if necessary, simplify them by including only the data you will need to make your point.
- Use numbers with only a few significant digits; round if necessary. If there is some graphical way to present the same information, do so, because your audience will be more likely to grasp it.
- **Keep it really simple:** only show on screen what's needed to illustrate point. Include on each slide only information that you will discuss. Other information is distracting and confusing. Limit each slide to one main idea, and just a few sentences. Remember that nobody listens as long as they have something to read.
- **Make sure your slides are readable.** Font sizes of 18-24 pt work well in most cases.
- Slides with light backgrounds may be more legible than slides with dark backgrounds, particularly if any room light is present. Most computer-generated slides project much darker than they appear on the computer screen. Choose colour combinations that contrast well, and remember that there will be colour-blind people in the audience.
- **Organise your slideshow.** If you refer to the same slide more than once, use duplicates. Do not torment the audience by "rewinding" or "fast-forwarding" through your slides to find the one you want to recall.
- If you have a lot to say about a table or figure, reproduce it and highlight the specific parts you'll talk about in turn. This will pace your talk as well, rather than having your talk stall on a single slide.

## Remember in particular that

- There CANNOT be any mistakes on your slides (submit your PPT to your instructor via email beforehand!)
- You must know how to PRONOUNCE the technical terms you will use (including abbreviations).
- You CANNOT translate anything or use French during your presentation, even during the discussion, even if students in the audience use French.
- You are NOT supposed to read a written text (written English is quite different from spoken English).
- You CANNOT circulate documents whatsoever during your presentation.

- Your task is to do a **GROUP presentation**. It's one **presentation**. You are not expected to prepare the various parts of the presentation individually and have a quick meeting just before the class to glue the pieces together. Instead of a group presentation, you get a series of presentations equal to the number of presenters, which is quite different. Interact with each other.
- Interact with the class!!
- Your instructor may interrupt your **presentation if it lasts longer than the assigned 30+10 minutes**. This will indicate that you have not rehearsed and timed your presentation.